PILGRIM CARNIVAL

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Thesis Prepared for the Degree of

MASTER OF MUSIC

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH TEXAS

August 2002

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House, Kayli, Pilgrim Carnival. Master of Music (Composition), August 2002, 67 pp., 1 table, 4 illustrations, references, 26 titles.

This thesis explores an experimental music approach to writing autobiography. As a composition, Pilgrim Carnival took place as a travelling series of events. The central event was a sound installation for a blindfolded audience. This essay is a description of that series of events as well as a discussion of similar precedents in interdisciplinary art.

Beginning with Luigi Russolo and Marcel Duchamp, aspects of autobiography are examined in both noise music and the concept of the ready-made artwork. Body Art of the 1970s, particularly the work of Marina Abramovic, is also tied into the idea of the ready-made artwork as an explicitly autobiographical example. The hybrid form of Pilgrim Carnival and the concept of ready-made autobiographical music create ongoing potential for new work.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

DESCRIPTION, MEDIA, AND SUBJECT-MATTER OF PILGRIM CARNIVAL

Pilgrim Carnival is a two-week event in four parts: invitation, installation, reception, and thank-you card. It explores issues of the body and daily ritual through dialogue and affiliated sounds. It is a ceremonial piece, inspired by what was to be my own wedding in June 2000. Formally, Pilgrim Carnival plays with elements of acousmatic music, documentary film, and performance art. It is a hybrid of these traditions and for simplicity can be called interdisciplinary art.

This essay is an explanation and description of Pilgrim Carnival. The Introduction lays out the details of the piece as it was realized in November 2001 at the University of North Texas. Chapter Two is a lineage of pertinent historical context for Pilgrim Carnival, from the Italian Futurists to 1960s Happenings. Autobiographical logic in environmental noise music and body art is the subject of Chapter Three. Finally, the Conclusion is a discussion of how I arrived at Pilgrim Carnival through my own work as well as through historical influences. There I will look at practical obstacles that arose during production of Pilgrim Carnival, and I will examine the effects of the thesis process and influence of this essay on future projects.

The central focus of Pilgrim Carnival was a sound installation for a blindfolded audience. The installation consisted of a mix of live and recorded sounds, utilizing eight-

channel amplification and diffusion. The audience was ushered and seated around a woman, who performed a two-hour exercise routine in the center of the installation. In addition to the live exerciser, other live elements that were heard or felt included a photographer moving in and around the seated audience, posers sitting and smiling among the audience, and ushers with blindfolded audience members continually circumnavigating the installation space.

The recorded layer of sound was a thirty-minute acousmatic composition drawn from interviews with five women about their bodies, as well as observational recordings of a woman kick-boxing, a man lifting weights, and a woman getting ready in the morning – bathing, using the toilet, dressing, eating. The thirty-minute piece was looped as necessary to extend through the duration of the audience attending the installation. The eight-channel sound choreography was split primarily into four stereo planes, designating a plane for each interviewee for each response. This choreography was not rigidly compartmentalized, however, so that the voices and ambient sounds moved fluidly through the sound space.

The sound sources for the acousmatic layer, both interviews and observational recordings, were layered and organized both as a sound documentary and as an acousmatic musical composition. Therefore, the recorded sounds represent a documentary subject while their sonic parameters simultaneously create a non-representational composition. They provide narrative and contextual information as well as pitch, timbre, rhythm, and amplitude.

The sound sources, both live and recorded, were chosen not as disparate but as logical elements. Many of the sounds act as double entendres, and by blindfolding the audience, the confusing thus provocative sounds are emphasized. The sounds of the bathroom include rigorous scrubbing of skin and hair, splashing and moving around in water, applying lotion, and the mezzo piano breathing and sighing that accompanies all of the activities. The sounds of exercise are punctuated by heavy breathing, both patterned and irregular, as well as by naturally marcato grunts and groans, particularly from the male weightlifter.

In contrast to the strongly articulated and accentuated breath, voice, and movement in the acousmatic layer, the live elements were soft, subtle, and tentative. Female greeters quietly welcomed audience members, softly tying silky blindfolds onto them with delicate ribbons. Ushers led them slowly through the dark, step by reluctant step, whispering directions and carefully placing them into their unknown positions in the space. As the Exerciser, I performed a set of yoga positions unamplified in the center, and while my presence may have been inaudible to some seated on the periphery, to those on the inside it was a pianissimo source of intrigue and a slightly tangible kinetic tension. Meanwhile, seated audience members reticently shifted and breathed, sighed and giggled, contributing subtle ornamentation to the sound space.

The cast met by the audience affected the experience of the installation. I instructed the two female greeters to act very sweet and comforting. They were my mother and my best friend, so I knew they could do the job well. The male ushers, played by my brother-in-law, my cousin, and a good friend, were told to be gentlemen, firmly

holding audience members by their arms while politely whispering directions to them. By laying out very traditional gender roles for the greeters and the ushers, I generated a subtly sexualized atmosphere. Provocative sounds along with a sensually and psychologically charged atmosphere encouraged the audience to figure out the sound sources in order to either affirm or deny its position as voyeur.

The audience's interpretation of the sounds in addition to its participation in the construction of the sound-space diminished the cleavage between composition and performance. This was a goal of early experimental interdisciplinary art, particularly in the work and writings of Allan Kaprow. Its aesthetic qualities and historical lineage will be discussed in Chapter Two.

As a pre-compositional consideration, I listened to the way in which different sounds are patterned or arranged in time. I observed both naturally occurring, unintentional patterns and synthetic, or intentionally composed patterns. By narrowing my focus to speech and exercise, I chose two ends of the spectrum of pattern. Speech is unpredictable and organic; its pattern is an unintentional artifact of its primary purpose to verbalize thought. On the other hand, the patterns of exercise are done with intention to strengthen the body through repetition of movement. Speech can be repetitive at times, just as exercise has its moments of unpredictability. The opposition between the two types of pattern – unpredictable and repetitive – exists along a continuum in the case of speech and exercise.

The interview responses are extremely irregular, the spoken words being comprised of both animated storytelling and mundane listing of routine activities and

impersonal data. Most of the interview responses are self-deprecatory or embarrassed and are therefore full of uncomfortable stalls, thinking pauses, habitual clicks and sucks with the mouth, sighs, and laughter. After listening to the patterns of exercise, I focused on breath in particular as a contrasting rhythm to speech. Breath patterns during exercise, particularly kick-boxing, are necessarily regulated for both strength and defense. The stereo microphone positioned in the middle of the room recorded both the sounds of exhalation with each punch or kick and the left-right alternation of the exercise routine.

Other sensory and psychological elements charged the installation and helped create the piece during performance. By being blindfolded, audience members were in positions of both vulnerability and power. They were both vulnerable and powerful in that they had to depend on and were able to demand ushers to escort them in and out of the space. Vulnerability was evident in that they were often seated next to strangers, many were entering an unfamiliar space, and none were accustomed to being without sight. However, by choosing when to be served by the ushers, the blindfolds enabled all audience members to determine the length of the piece for themselves. If they chose not to be blind, they had the option of peeking out of their blindfolds. I trained the ushers by blindfolding myself and having them lead me around, and although I was in a definite position of power – telling them what to do in my piece in my performance space, the overwhelming sense I got was one of extreme vulnerability.

Several audience members claimed to feel vulnerable for varying reasons. Some did not know that the sound sources were recorded, wondering if people were actually bathing nude in the room. Many thought they were being ridiculed, although I took

extreme care to make the audience feel comfortable and welcome. One man left after about two minutes because he thought he was alone on a stage in front of an audience. Another became extremely embarrassed when he lovingly touched a stranger's leg thinking it belonged to his wife. Others were uneasy about the shutter sounds of the camera. Their feelings of vulnerability were particularly powerful, since all of these people were my personal friends.

As mentioned above, audience members on the inside row could hear me breathing during exercise, feel my movement through space, and possibly see my bare feet and arms through the bottoms of their blindfolds. I was originally going to perform the live exercise in the nude as to provide a temptation for peeking, a catharsis for myself, and to create black and white photographs that would visually reference and pay homage to 1970s performance art. Ironically, because the ushers were my family members, I was not comfortable being nude.

While the installation is the most formal and traditionally composed episode, Pilgrim Carnival is a travelling series of site-specific events. The first site is in each audience member's home. By being mailed an invitation, audience members were contacted in their own private spaces. This created an intimacy between composer and audience, and the invitation put the composition into a social context. Also, by sending the invitation a week in advance of the installation, anticipation became part of the compositional process. The invitation read as follows:

You are cordially invited to a
Pilgrim Carnival
Saturday 10 November 2001
Door open at seven o'clock p.m.
Merrill Ellis Intermedia Theater

University of North Texas College of Music
Reception dinner following at 1211 Kendolph, Denton, Texas
Dress to Impress
No children please

I intentionally left the invitation ambiguous in order to force the invitees to rely on their own interpretations of such things as "Pilgrim Carnival," "Doors open at," "Merrill Ellis Intermedia Theater," "College of Music," "Dress to Impress," and "No Children." The invitees were comprised of family friends, local acquaintances, and the composition faculty at the university.

Invitees were most disturbed by the request that they "Dress to Impress." Some called me to ask what that meant, but most called my mother and asked most frequently, "Is Tim (my dad) wearing a tie?" A boyfriend of a colleague of mine brazenly forewarned that he would be wearing his "Shut Up Bitch" t-shirt in order to make an impression, but alas, he showed up in a gray cable-knit sweater and black slacks. I took the phrase from a radio advertisement for an adult dance club, which continues to confuse me. I suppose what they really mean by "dress to impress" is "dress to attract," since it is used in the context of ladies night or singles night. Pilgrim Carnival may not have been a magnet for quality singles, but the instruction to dress to impress gave the event a sense of formality. Many men wore suits, which are less dated than casual wear, and several of the ladies wore their best jewelry, which sparkled beautifully in the infrared video. "Dress to Impress" has deeper significance in that it is an order to perform the body in a particular manner. This is a common theme in Pilgrim Carnival, and performing the body in art and as an art object is a topic of Chapter Three.

The invitation as a site-specific event served to bring the anticipation of Pilgrim Carnival into each audience member's home. It could have been seen as an invasion, creating nervousness about what the performance would be and how to prepare for it. It may also or rather have served as a welcoming device, arriving at their homes, cordially familiarizing the audience members with the installation in advance of their experiencing it. The invitation may have confused and/or clarified. Depending on an invitee's reaction to it, the invitation could have threatened, soothed, or both. Regardless of how it was received, the invitation established a relationship between the artist and her audience in advance of the art.

Several artists have utilized the mail to disseminate their artworks. This is not to be confused with using the mail for advertisement, which is a common practice of art galleries and performance spaces. La Monte Young and George Brecht both mailed their event scores as part of their performance. Their use of mail connected their work to an audience outside of the traditional performance or exhibition space in an informal and intimate manner. Simultaneously, it also expanded the time and space taken up by the pieces and added functionality as communications to them as well. Brecht's event scores were originally "distributed to friends, who perform them at their discretion and without ceremony."[1] The invitation to Pilgrim Carnival connected to the audience at home, but in contrast to Brecht's scores, the invitations instilled a sense of ceremony in the upcoming event. Inviting the audience via mail did not exist autonomously as a piece, but it initiated

[1] Allan Kaprow, "Assemblage, Environments, and Happenings," in Mariellen Sandford *Happenings and Other Acts* (New York: Routledge, 1995) 239.

a process that was completed through the attendance of the installation and reception and finally by the arrival of a thank-you card in the mail or email.

The second site of Pilgrim Carnival is the performance hall or auditorium – in this case the Merrill Ellis Intermedia Theater at the University of North Texas. The theater space is not a proscenium stage but a round room with moveable chairs. For this installation, chairs were arranged in concentric circles around the central live performer and within the amplified sound center. Performance happened in the center, around the periphery, in the aisles, and in the seats of the theater.

In *Theater Piece No. 1*, also known as the 1952 happening at Black Mountain College, John Cage chose a non-traditional seating arrangement and stage space. The stage was the entire space. Chairs were set up in a square separated into four triangles pointing inward. Performers used mainly the periphery but also the aisles and center of the seating space. Rejection of the traditional proscenium stage was a common thread in experimental 1960s theater, dance, art, and music performances. Happenings typically happened, though not by definition or necessity, in a non-conventional setting such as in an art gallery, a home, parking lot, or park. Much avant-garde performance has been presented in such spaces, thus precluding the use of a proscenium stage.

In Pilgrim Carnival, the blindfolded audience was unaware of the arrangement of the theater, and the relevance of this site as part of the piece's meaning was less the particular theater and more that it was a designated performance space in a university. Because the sound installation was in a theater in the university music building, audience members arrived with expectations of some form of musical concert. La Monte Young

played with these types of expectations at the University of California at Berkeley, when his *Composition 1960 #5* was rejected for a concert:

> …I was in a social situation at Berkeley that was very stifling and very academic. [*Compositions 1960*] should be seen in a social context. They're especially meaningful when performed in a traditional concert setting, more so than if they're performed in a gallery/happening-type setting, because they were composed specifically in response to what was happening to me at Berkeley. You know: "You can't write this way"; or "you can't do this kind of concert in the auditorium." They wouldn't allow me to perform the butterfly piece in Hertz Hall so, as a result of that, I did the chamber opera version of *Poem*. [2]

Young took the academic rejection of a quiet, poignant piece as a point of origin for a rebellious extravaganza. As an outgrowth of Dada, many of the 1960s avant-garde performance pieces were rebellious. They often confronted the audience and treated it as a potential adversary. Marina Abramovic, whose work is discussed at length in Chapter Three, exploited this issue to its fullest by actually supplying her audience with weapons, which they were instructed to use on her as they wished. My work is emphatically not anti-audience. My intention is to make the audience as comfortable, welcome, and as well fed as possible. I do not believe audiences today would accept being accosted as a valuable artistic experience. Voyeurism, rather than sado-masochism, seems to be a more pertinent issue to today's audiences. Reality TV as a genre has exploded in the past decade, and it continues to be a highly marketable format of television entertainment. However, some recent reality television shows, such as Fear Factor, Survivor, and

[2] "…I had someone on stage frying eggs, and a girl in the aisle was sleeping in a sleeping bag, and a game of marbles was going on somewhere, and Phyllis Jones was playing Beethoven at the piano, and my *2 sounds* was being played electronically on speakers, and my entire music appreciation class and Gardner Rust's entire music appreciation class were walking through the audience reading from their music appreciation textbooks, and I was walking through the audience shouting "Green" into a bucket. And Bruce Connor, the artist, had a cricket in his shoe – you know, one of those that clicks—and he was walking through the audience and passing out literature." from William Duckworth, "La Monte Young (b. Bern, Idaho, 1935) and Marian Zazeela (b. New York, 1940)," in *Talking Music* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1995), 234-5.

MTV's Fear, cater to a contemporary popular audience's desire for sadistic as well as voyeuristic spectacle.

The third site of Pilgrim Carnival was the reception at my home. That decision was partially influenced by Meredith Monk's *Juice: a theatre cantata in three installments* (1969). The first installment of *Juice* involved eighty-five performers on the enormous spiral ramp of the Guggenheim Museum. Part two took place three weeks later and was a paring down of part one presented in the Minor Latham Playhouse at Barnard College. A week after that, the third installment was in Monk's own loft apartment, where the audience was invited to view objects and costumes used in the first two installments as well as televisions playing interviews with different cast members. Dance historians Deborah Jowitt and Sally Banes have both written extensively on Monk, and regarding *Juice*, Banes writes:

> As Deborah Jowitt has suggested, the scale of the piece diminished as the information about the characters increased, yet any resulting sense of growing intimacy was offset by distancing devices.[3] At the museum, the performers were living sculptures that the spectators could hear breathing. At the Minor Latham, the audience was separated from the performance by a proscenium arch. Finally, at Monk's loft, though one could even smell the sweat on the costumes, the performers were made totally remote, once-removed by the video screen. The museum and loft had switched functions by the end of the piece.[4]

Several aspects of Monk's work have inspired mine, but particularly her recurring use of travelling sites over time. By moving her audience through different spaces over time, she incorporates memory and reflection into her work and juxtaposes space and intimacy. Navigation through space is an essential element of her work, and this is instilled in her audience both by using pedestrian movement in her choreography and by

[3] Deborah Jowitt, "Echoes and Reverberations," *Village Voice*, December 11, 1969, p. 33, cited in Sally Banes, *Terpsichore in Sneakers* (Hanover: Wesleyan University Press, 1977) 153.
[4] Sally Banes, *Terpsichore in Sneakers*, 153.

directing the audience to walk through and/or between performance spaces. She makes art within art, creating multi-layered works.

Inviting the audience to my own home for dinner after they visited the installation added autobiographical meaning to the piece. My home had been the site of the environmental recordings used in the acousmatic layer of the installation, and I interviewed myself in my kitchen. During the reception, guests sat and ate in the same place where I sat and interviewed myself while eating. If they had to use the bathroom, they used my bathroom, where I had recorded myself using the bathroom. A recording of the unmixed sounds played in my bathroom, so that as people used the bathroom – the site of the recordings, they would be reminded of the installation. They would also literally see themselves in the mirror as they performed the same activities that I had performed, recorded, and played in the installation. By having it in my home, the reception dinner not only gave the piece an aspect of self-exposure for myself and for the audience, but it also gave it warmth and a show of gratitude for experiencing my art, which in itself is an extension of autobiography.

The entire series of events, from invitation through installation and reception, to the closing thank-you card, serves to externalize the relevance of the physical body as a vehicle for social, psychological, and artistic expression. It is both autobiographical and biographical, private and public. In its content, ceremonial structure, and as a catharsis for me, Pilgrim Carnival functions as both a parody of and a substitute for a wedding.

The content of the interviews and ambient sounds were conceptualized during the almost-getting-married phase of my life. While engaged and planning a large traditional

wedding, I became very aware of the conventional beauty habits of women in this region. When I would tell women that I was getting married, many would respond, “oh, are you growing out your hair?” The focus of the whole event was on the physical appearance and bodily functions of the bride. As a bride, I was taught to worry about my weight, hair, skin, nails, breasts, bikini line, lingerie, corsets, garter belts, hosiery, shoes, jewelry, and period on and for at least a year before my wedding day. I was not alone. My mother, sister, relatives, friends, hairdresser, manicurist, dermatologist, dressmaker, and gynecologist also worried for me.

I chose to interview women in their bathrooms because it is an intimate site and the locus of a relationship with the body, at least it is where I am most aware of my body. Among the women that I interviewed and for myself, daily ablutions and dressing are individualized rituals, which serve to reaffirm physicality and balance the private with the public self-image. These rituals prepare the mind for social interaction through preparing the body. Exercise similarly prepares the mind through the body and was included as a topic in the interviews and as environmental source sounds for the acousmatic composition.

By entering into this world of wedding preparation, I became aware of my own need for everyday beauty ritual. I realized that I had a very specific and set routine to prepare my body for its daily social performance. If that routine was disrupted, I found myself to be less functional throughout the day. I began asking other people about their daily rituals and found that many people, particularly but not exclusively women, have intricate daily beauty routines that function as essential rituals in their lives. In addition to

a few buffer questions to acclimate the interviewees to the situation, I made a list of interview questions based on my own ritual and why I felt it to be so essential:

- What is your name?
- When were you born?
- Where?
- What did you have for lunch yesterday?
- Do you exercise?
- What is your typical fitness routine?
- How long does it take you to get ready in the morning?
- Can you please walk me through your routine?
- Which part of your routine do you think you could do without?
- What is absolutely essential, say if you were camping?
- Do you do anything beauty-wise to please other people or do you feel it is all for your own self-image? (Does your husband have any special requests?)
- What do you feel is your most naturally beautiful feature?
- With what parts of yourself do you struggle the most?
- Describe the ugliest photograph of you.
- When you envision yourself happy, how old are you, what doing, wearing?
- When you're gone, what outfit do you want people to remember you wearing?

The interview questions were formatted to progress in intimacy and poignancy as the interviewees grew accustomed to exposing themselves. This is the "logical order for an interview" [5] used in documentary filmmaking. The subjects were asked to list their daily beauty routines in exhaustive detail, after which they were questioned about issues of self-image, happiness, age, and death.

Considerations for picking my interview subjects ranged from sound parameters to personality and convenience. I chose a range of women, each with very distinct personalities: shy, silly, sarcastic, sweet, and dry. They all had Texas accents, some more than others. Intonation, loudness, and pitch range were also factors in my decision.

[5] "The only logical order for an interview is the order that makes sense to the interviewee. Facts are safe, while opinions or feelings require more trust and a more relaxed stated of mind. Thus, keep the most demanding material for the end, when our subject has become used to the situation and is even enjoying it." Michael Rabiger, *Directing the Documentary*, Third Edition (Boston: Focal Press, 1998) 181.

According to the class notes of student George Brecht, John Cage taught composition via matrices in his class at the New School, listing dimensions of sound in scientific terms.[6] They were primarily used in chance compositions to ensure composer non-intention. In the interviews for Pilgrim Carnival, my intention is most present in my sound-dimensional choices regarding subjects, questions, and interview location and style.

The four-part structure of Pilgrim Carnival was modeled after the social components of a traditional wedding: invitation, ceremony, reception, and thank-you card. Unfortunately, I did not include showers or a honeymoon. The invitation list included family and friends who would have been invited to my wedding, in addition to new friends, colleagues, and professors. The cast of the ceremony/installation and reception were comprised of family and close friends, who would have acted as ushers, greeters, bridesmaids, mother and father of the bride, photographer, and caterer if I were to have a wedding.

Pilgrim Carnival in November 2001 was the first time I made contact with many of the invited family friends since the cancellation of the June 2000 wedding. That added a shared social dynamic for much of the audience and a cathartic risk for me. I was panicked about inviting them as I had been previously for the wedding. This time I went through with it.

The four women that I interviewed acted as support for me within the installation space as well as in the acousmatic piece, with my sister functioning as a maid of honor.

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[6] Liz Kotz, "Post-Cagean Aesthetics and the 'Event' Score," (*October* 95, Winter 2001) 66-68.

Besides my own, her interview was used most in the acousmatic piece. She also took on the role of maid of honor by helping me get ready physically, making sure that I had all of my necessities for the performance, and by organizing the girls in the space. She also took control of the lighting, the ushers, and directed the hostesses. She instigated different cheeky endeavors among the cast, as a maid of honor or best man may instigate the tying of cans to the getaway car.

My mother also dove into the role of mother of the bride, becoming somewhat obsessed with such things as linens, crystal, silver, and china, my outfit, and especially her outfit. Both of my parents were very concerned that I appropriately invited their friends, asking me to make special exceptions for them and tell them exactly what the piece would be like. I told them that I could not tell them exactly what it would be like, because I was not sure of that myself, just that it might be obscene. I thought if they expected the worst, they would be pleasantly surprised.

The role and placement of the soundperson was analogous to that of a preacher in a wedding. He was in charge of the installation space, started the ceremony, the audience faced him, albeit unknowingly, and I paid him fifty dollars. He also tried to add several aspects to the piece at the last minute. The theater was set up for a twenty-channel concert the following week, so the day before my installation, the soundperson asked me if I wanted to reconfigure my eight-channel piece for twenty speakers. He also presented me with an optional bass speaker, possible lighting, and remote control mixer fifteen minutes before the installation opened. Though his intentions were to provide me with the best available technology, I was reminded of the meeting my ex-fiancé and I had with the

preacher about the wedding ceremony. As the decision-making bride, the preacher bombarded me with questions about altarpieces, pew cushions, and especially unity candles: “Do you want one candle, or do you want three with the one in the middle? Do you want them all to be the same color? Sorry, we do not allow wreaths around the candles. Do you want them to be behind or in front of you, or to the side? Do you want to light them yourselves, or do you want your parents, or just your fathers or just your mothers or just your step-sister’s uncle?”

Excessive time, effort, and money were spent on Pilgrim Carnival both to parody the traditional wedding ceremony and inevitably, to create my own catharsis through a grandiose production. The reception dinner had originally been a compositional decision, sending the audience to another site to mingle and chat about what they had experienced in the installation. Like a wedding, the reception eventually became the central focus of the event. What was going to be cocktails and snacks turned into a three-course sit-down dinner with white linens, silver, china, candles, and a large effort to provide outdoor lighting.

The patchwork cover of the guest book was hand-sewn by me the night before the performance. In addition to the guest book, I also sewed seventy-five blindfolds, with three layers of material, padding (for comfort), and ribbons. The blindfolds probably took around fifty hours to make, and the material was no cheaper than if I had ordered seventy-five sleeping masks pre-made. My first experience with a nervous bride was when my best friend Suzi got married. The morning of her wedding she was altering our white gloves, finger by finger with pleats, because they looked like Mickey Mouse’s

hands. The bride's do-it-yourself attitude is comical in retrospect but frightening in the moment. Like daily beauty rituals, the repetitive and unnecessary completion of every little task by the bride-to-be serves a therapeutic function, preparing her for the large social ceremony.

An unnecessary effort that I made, not out of nervousness or procrastination, was sending invitations and thank-you cards to the audience. It is unusual to receive an invitation to a music concert, while invitations are standard for gallery openings, but the invitations and thank-you cards together are primarily a convention of ceremonial social events like weddings, bar-mitzvahs, showers, and graduations. Other compositional decisions that grew out of the wedding tradition included choice and placement of photographer and videographers, seating arrangement, how the ushers were to walk with and seat audience members, directional signs to the installation, and maps or transportation to the reception site.

The many layers of sound and activity, both social and musical, were directly influenced by what was to be my wedding. I chose to abstract the topic of a wedding, using its form as a springboard and not its literal material, such as the bride and groom, traditional music and sermon. Other artists have chosen to use the literal material of weddings and other ceremonies in performance pieces. Robert Ashley presented his "Combination Wedding and Funeral" [7] in May of 1965, which was a literal (re)staging of a traditional wedding and funeral with just a few satirical variations. The bride was a monkeybride called "Monkey" by the Minister, and she was brought down the aisle

shackled to a large box. The box had a curtain on the backside and coffin handles on its sides. Upon unveiling the bride for the nuptial kiss, the curtain on the backside of the box was lifted, revealing a nude girl. The nude girl moved in tandem with the ceremonial motions of the bride and groom, stepping out of the coffin-box as the groom stepped toward the bride for the kiss. The girl was then lifted onto a table to become the base for the wedding cake. As the bride and groom went through the receiving line, the Mendelssohn "Wedding March" concluded and the organist immediately began a funereal hymn, transitioning from the wedding to the funeral.

Although the few variations in the ceremony plus the juxtaposition of wedding and funeral entirely changed the meaning of the piece, the materials of the piece—cast, staging, music, and speech—came literally out of the traditional American Protestant wedding and funeral ceremonies. By re-presenting this material in the context of art, Ashley drew attention to standardized elements of religious ceremonies, from the music to the synchronized slow steps of the bridesmaids and choreographed nuptial kiss. Additionally, he satirized not only the ceremony but also the institution by presenting the bride in triplicate – as a monkey, a nude girl who gets eaten as cake, and in a box which becomes a coffin immediately following the wedding.

In "Combination Wedding and Funeral," Ashley used both ceremonial form and material. The form of Pilgrim Carnival is ceremonial, but the subject matter, or material, is banal. It is made of the everyday bodily functions of washing, dressing, exercising and eating. Within those daily routines, however, lies deeper implications of how and why we

[7] Described by The ONCE Group, "Three Pieces," in *Happenings and Other Acts*, Edited by Mariellen R.

construct ourselves as we do. Women talking about how they dry their hair and shave their legs are presented as musical material. Exercise is presented as aural choreography. My home functioned as a stage, a set, and a party site. The piece was initiated and ended in each audience member's home via mail, expanding its length and number of performance sites. Everyday materials of my life were exhibited like Duchampian readymades, and the audience was left to make meaning for themselves.

The readymade materials and four-part form of Pilgrim Carnival were connected by my own autobiographical logic. By using the wedding as a performance structure, I established a personal connection for myself and for invited family and friends. The concerns with beauty of the bride and physical ritual in preparation for a wedding and for marriage are part of being a woman in my cultural situation. I broadened the topic to everyday beauty concerns and body preparations in the interviews with the five women. The structure and the content of Pilgrim Carnival are private and public, relevant to me on a personal level but general enough to address a broad audience.

Sandford (New York: Routledge, 1995) 189-194.

CHAPTER 2

CONTEXT: A PARTICULAR HISTORICAL LINEAGE

In this chapter, I will show relations between the works and artists that are relevant as precedents of Pilgrim Carnival. While the historical lineage of both performance art and experimental music are vast, I will be drawing from both and laying out a particular genealogy that has influenced my own work. This is not a comprehensive survey of performance art, body art, noise music, acousmatic music, and the avant-garde. The following is a non-narrative lineage of interdisciplinary art that has affected my style and which incorporates elements that are pertinent to Pilgrim Carnival. Artists discussed in this chapter include Luigi Russolo, Marcel Duchamp, John Cage, and his students George Brecht and Allan Kaprow, and La Monte Young. In Chapter Three, I will further discuss points in this lineage and other works with respect to autobiography and the incorporation of the artist's body into his/her work.

Luigi Russolo publicly declared the Futurists' intent and reasons to add families of noises to their compositional palette in his *Futurist Manifesto* of 1913. As an emotionally necessary reaction to the inundation of noises produced by industrial machines and modern warfare, Russolo and the Futurists sought to "enlarge and enrich the field of sound"[1] previously available to a traditional orchestra by "break[ing] out of

[1] Luigi Russolo, "Futurist Manifesto," *The Art of Noises*, trans. Barclay Brown (New York: Pendragon Press, 1986) 28.

this limited circle of sounds and conquer[ing] the infinite variety of noise-sounds."[2] Remaining true to the tradition of absolute music, Russolo further states, "It will not be through a succession of noises imitative of life but through a fantastic association of the different timbres and rhythms that the new orchestra will obtain the most complex and novel emotions of sound."[3]

While modernism did influence the Futurists' desire for new noise in music, it was modernism "through the noises produced in the clash of modern warfare" that was the primary resonant force in the ears of the Futurists. Through association with F.T. Marinetti, Tristan Tzara and other Dadaists appropriated *bruitisme*, or "noise with imitative effects," without the Futurists' political activism or "purely Italian concerns."[4] Because the Futurists were pro-war[5], at least in the 1920s, and the Dadaists were anti-war[6], Dada redefined bruitism to suit their own purposes. The rift was not only political, but also musical. The following passage recounts a Dada reaction to a Futurist concert given as part of the *Dada Salon* in June of 1922:

> The Italian bruitists, led by Marinetti, were giving a performance of works written for their new instruments. These works were pale, insipid and melodious in spite of Russolo's noise-music, and the Dadaists who attended did not fail to express their feelings—and very loudly. Marinetti asked indulgence for Russolo, who had been wounded in the war and had undergone a serious operation

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[2] *Ibid.,* 25
[3] *Ibid.*, 29.
[4] Richard Huelsenbeck, *Collective Dada Manifesto*, in *The Dada Painters and Poets*, ed. Robert Motherwell (Boston: Wittenborn Schultz, 1951) 245.
[5] Russolo describes his fervor for enlisting in World War I amidst a tour in 1914: "From London we should have gone on to Liverpool, to Dublin, Glasgow, Edinburgh and Vienna, and then started another long tour that included Moscow, Berlin and Paris. The war caused it all to be postponed. Meanwhile in Italy, the long period of neutrality started. And there began our long struggle for intervention, which lasted until that glorious May when war was declared. Then, abandoning everything to enlist voluntarily, I left for the front, together with my futurist friends, Marinetti, Boccioni, Piatti, Sant'Elia, and Sironi. And I was lucky enough to fight in the midst of the marvelous and grand and tragic symphony of modern war." Russolo, 36.
[6] Richard Huelsenbeck thoroughly describes the political views of the founders of Dada in *En Avant Dada: A History of Dada (1920)*, Motherwell, 23-24.

> on his skull. This moved the Dadaists to demonstrate violently how little impressed they were by a reference to the war.[7]

Richard Huelsenbeck explained bruitism as a "kind of return to nature," where "death ceases to be an escape of the soul from earthly misery and becomes vomiting, screaming and choking." And while Huelsenbeck claims that initially Dadaists "desired the opposite: calming of the soul, an endless lullaby, art, abstract art,"[8] he presents a more affirmative and strongly stated position on Dada's relation to bruitism (and simultaneity) in his *Collective Manifesto of Dada* of the same year:

> Life appears as a simultaneous muddle of noises, colors and spiritual rhythms, which is taken unmodified into Dadaist art, with all the sensational screams and fevers of its reckless everyday psyche and with all its brutal reality. This is a sharp dividing line separating Dadaism from all artistic directions up until now and particularly from FUTURISM which not long ago some puddingheads took to be a new version of impressionist realization.[9]

The point of contention between the Dadaists and the Futurists was aesthetic as well as political. Dadaists wanted noise to be presented as it is, without aesthetic intervention, while Russolo attributed abstract musical qualities to noise, looking at noise in terms of pitch and timbre. Pierre Schaeffer further expounded upon this differentiation of the functions of sounds in his magnetic tape-recorded *musique concrète*. On May 15, 1948, Schaeffer wrote:

> This determination to compose with materials taken from an existing collection of experimental sounds, I name *musique concrète* to mark well the place in which we find ourselves, no longer dependent upon preconceived sound abstractions, but now using fragments of sound existing concretely and considered as sound objects defined and whole…[10]

It is Schaeffer's aesthetic of found sound as music that connects the history of electronic music to the lineage of influences presented here. Schaeffer's music is not mere

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[7] Georges Ribemot-Dessaignes, "History of Dada," Motherwell, 117.
[8] Richard Huelsenbeck, *En Avant Dada: A History of Dada (1920)*, Motherwell, 26.
[9] Richard Huelsenbeck, *Collective Dada Manifesto*, Motherwell, 244.

presentation of recorded sounds; the sounds are gathered and then organized via cutting and mixing. His composed presentation of found concrete sounds, particularly *Etude aux Chemins de Fer* (1948), directly influenced my compositional approach to the acousmatic layer of Pilgrim Carnival.

Prior to the technology of magnetic tape, Dada affiliate Erik Satie presented concrete sounds of a typewriter into his otherwise abstract composition *Parade* (1917). In addition to noise, or the sounds of everyday modern life, the Dadaists brought its visual equivalent, the images and objects of everyday modern life, into their anti-aesthetic aesthetic. The most famous Dadaist proponent of visual noise was Marcel Duchamp. His presentation of "readymades" as art can be read as a visual translation of the idea of making noise into music. In reference to Duchamp's first readymade, *Bottle Rack* (1914), Robert Motherwell defines "readymade" as "a manufactured commercial object from everyday life that [Duchamp] selected and exhibited under his own name, conferring on it the status of 'sculpture,' an anti-art and consequently dada gesture."[11]

Shortly after the premier of *Bottle Rack*, Duchamp uprooted to New York with the onset of World War I and his rejection by the French army. Shown in New York in 1917, his most famous readymade is *Fountain* (1917), a urinal signed and dated by "R.Mutt." The Futurists placed a high demand on audiences and composers to disassociate noises with their purely imitative potential, listening to them also as musical combinations of pitch and timbre. Similarly, Duchamp's ready-mades not only "divested [common

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[10] Pierre Schaeffer, *A la Recherche d'une Musique Concrète* (Paris: Editions dy Seuil, 1952) 22, quoted in Joel Chadabe, *Electronic Sound* (New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1997) 26.
[11] Motherwell, *xxiii*.

manufactured objects] of their utilitarian existence and breathed new identity into them"[12], they also confronted spectators with the responsibility of completing the meaning and finding the art in the artwork.

John Cage, both a friend and a follower of Duchamp, furthered the aesthetic ideologies and effects shared by the Futurists' noise music and Duchamp's readymades. In his groundbreaking work *4'33"*(1952) Cage forced a reticent audience to find music in what had previously been considered silence. In his writings and in his music, Cage respected both notated sounds and non-notated sounds of silence.[13] "Silence" for Cage and the experimental music tradition hereafter does not mean an absolute silence absent of all sound. Rather silence permits a tabula rasa of intention. Silence removes the imposition of composer's intention onto the sound-space. The remaining environmental sound-space is a continual backdrop or partner for composed sound and is omnipresent and everpresent, but its status as foreground is enabled by silence. In *4'33",* John Cage exaggerated this starring role of silence by intending nothing aural.

4'33" was not only an exposé of the musicality of silence, but it also explicated the inherent visuality of musical performance. David Tudor sitting at the piano was the only staged context for the piece. His opening and closing of the keyboard cover visually signified the starts and finishes of the three movements. The audience may have involuntarily listened to silence, but perhaps more consciously they watched a performer.

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[12] Gabrielle Buffet-Picabia, "Some Memories of Pre-Dada: Picabia and Duchamp," trans. Ralph Manheim, Motherwell, 258.

[13] "For in this new music nothing takes place but sounds: those that are notated and those that are not. Those that are not notated appear in the written music as silences, opening the doors of the music to the sounds that happen to be in the environment." John Cage, "Experimental Music," *Silence* (Hanover: Wesleyan University Press, 1961) 7-8.

Cage's more explicitly theatrical compositions, particularly *Theater Piece No. 1* (1952), played with expectations and traditional definitions of music and art. *Theater Piece No. 1* was an impromptu collaboration staged by Cage in the dining hall of Black Mountain College during the summer session of 1952. On the day of the performance, Cage conceptualized the piece and assigned his chance-derived time compartments to each performer. Collaborators included David Tudor, Merce Cunningham, Robert Rauschenberg, and others. The performance took place in and around an audience arranged in concentric squares, and it consisted of the collaborators more or less acting as themselves with twists of higgledy-piggledy absurdity. Cage described the piece as follows:

> At one end of the rectangular hall, the long end, was a movie and at the other end were slides. I was up on a ladder delivering a lecture which included silences and there was another ladder which M.C. Richards and Charles Olsen went up at different times. During periods that I called time brackets, the performers were free within limitations…Robert Rauschenberg was playing an old-fashioned phonograph that had a horn and a dog on the side listening, and David Tudor was playing a piano, and Merce Cunningham and other dancers were moving through the audience and around the audience.[14]

The event was groundbreaking even for Cage. In his earlier pieces, he had filled his time compartments with sounds but in *Theater Piece No. 1,* he also filled them with movements and visual elements. Cage is often credited with the broadening of the definition of music to include all sounds. *Theater Piece No. 1* opened up music to extramusical or non-sonic material as well. This piece is particularly relevant to Pilgrim Carnival and my work in general because in it all elements, not just those that make sounds, are orchestrated in the same manner as sounds.

[14] Michael Kirby and Richard Schechner, "An Interview with John Cage," *Happenings and Other Acts*, ed. Mariellen Sandford (New York: Routledge, 1995) 53.

The disparate elements of speeches, dances, Rauschenberg's *White Paintings*, and a dog barking did not explain each other or unite in a common narrative, and this alogical construct would influence an entire genre of performance art. Lou Harrison was among the audience members and is reported to have found the piece "quite boring."[15] Nevertheless, *Theater Piece No. 1* (a title later given by Cage) is considered to be the first "happening."

In the late 1950s and 1960s, Cage's notoriety for employment of chance in composition and an interdisciplinary approach attracted and influenced a wide range of artists. Cage taught a course in "Composition of Experimental Music" at the New School for Social Research from 1956-1960. The class was open to musicians and non-musicians alike, and it attracted several artists. Among his students were Allan Kaprow and George Brecht. Kaprow was an aspiring "noisician" (his own title) who wished to incorporate noise into his visual art. George Brecht was a chemist and tampon pioneer for Johnson & Johnson. Brecht encouraged Kaprow to join the Cage class after they discussed his desire to use noise in his art.

In his experimental music class, Cage taught his students composition that was "a composite of performance, sound…, musical sound (including Cage's noise), spaces and environments, concepts, and so on that could be composed independently of one another if so desired."[16] While in Cage's composition class, Kaprow created several happenings. By assembling objects, sounds, and activities from everyday life, participating spectators

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[15] Mary Emma Harris, *The Arts at Black Mountain College* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1987) 228.

[16] Douglas Kahn, *Noise, Water, Meat: A History of Sound in the Arts* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1999) 275-6.

were left to connect the elements into art during the performances of Kaprow's happenings. He claims that continual rearrangements of these elements "would simply continue the compositional process into the performance process and the two usually distinct phases would begin to merge as the caesura between them is pulled out."[17] They not only begin to merge in his happenings, he requires that the performance creates the composition. Throughout the 1960s, Kaprow composed several happenings that commingled previously exclusive pairs, such as performance and composition and art and the everyday. He has since written extensively about the relations between art and life and is more widely known as an art historian and coiner of the term "happening" than for his actual work.

Kaprow's *18 Happenings in 6 Parts* (1959) spawned the media use of the term "happening" for the new genre, later defined by Michael Kirby as "a purposefully composed form of theatre in which diverse alogical elements, including nonmatrixed performing, are organized in a compartmented structure."[18] Cage's influence on happenings can be seen in both their constructing and constructive materials. "Alogic" is a common thread in Cage's work, often arrived at through chance operations in composition or indeterminacy in performance. "Nonmatrixed performance" was evident in *Theater Piece No. 1* since the cast acted as themselves in their actual setting. Similarly, David Tudor's performance of *4'33"* was nonmatrixed; he was himself at the piano on stage, not acting out a character in an imaginary other place. "Compartmented structure"

[17] Allan Kaprow, "Assemblages, Environments, and Happenings," Sandford, 244.
[18] Michael Kirby, "Happenings: An Introduction," Sandford, 11.

is the underlying aesthetic behind Cage's music. Many of his works are comprised of composed durations that are not narratively connected.

Joel Chadabe wrote, "Cage conceptualized musical structure as an array of empty glasses of predetermined sizes to be filled with sounds or silences."[19] George Brecht literally composed the filling of empty glasses through his Drip Music (Drip Events) (1959-62). For the drip events, water was dripped into an empty vessel. Brecht was concerned with not only the sound of dripping, but with the entire event. Liz Kotz states:

> As they take shape in 1960-61, Brecht's "events" represent both an extension and a focusing of the Cagean project – an *extension* because not only sound and hearing but "everything that happens"[20] provides potential materials, and a *focusing* because *singularity*, rather than multiplicity or simultaneity, will be the result.[21]

Compared not only to Cage but also to Alan Kaprow's large-scale productions, George Brecht's happenings were pared down considerably and simply instigated by short event scores. As referenced in the Introduction, his event scores were sometimes mailed to friends; they were informal and unpretentious. The most succinct example of on of his event scores is as follows:

WORD EVENT
1. Exit
Spring, 1961 —George Brecht

Brecht's everyday anti-art was celebrated by the Neo-Dada Fluxus group and its publisher and chairman George Maciunas. Maciunas credited Brecht with continuing the readymade lineage begun by Duchamp, expanded to readymade noise by Cage, and further "into ready-made actions, everyday actions, so for instance a piece of George

[19] Chadabe, 25.
[20] "I wanted to make music that wouldn't just be for the ears. Music isn't just what you hear or what you listen to, but everything that happens." From "An Interview with George Brecht by Irmeline Lebeer," (1973) in Henry Martin, *An Introduction to George Brecht's Book of the Tumbler on Fire* (Milan: Multhipla Edizioni, 1978) 84, quoted in Kotz, 72.

Brecht where he turned a light on and off, okay? That's the piece. Turn the light on and then off. Now you do that every day, right?"[22] By broadening the definition of music to include "everything that happens," Brecht had to pare down "everything that happens" in order to make that definition clear.

La Monte Young's 1960 compositions were self-titled "word pieces" that functioned like Brecht's event scores, but they focused specifically on the sounds of events. His *Composition 1960 #2* instructs the performer to build a fire on stage, sit and watch it until it burns away, but be sure not to obstruct the audience's view so that they too can enjoy the fire. While he seems to emphasize the visual aspect of the piece, the final instruction in the score reads: "In the event that the performance is broadcast, the microphone may be brought up close to the fire."[23] This instruction allows the piece to exist as sound alone and still be complete.

As mentioned in the Introduction, *Composition 1960 #5* tells the performer to set a butterfly loose in the performance space for any duration. While this seems even more focused on the visual, Young argued its sonic validity in response to a friend:

> I said I felt certain that the butterfly made sounds, … and that unless one was going to dictate how loud or soft the sounds had to be before they could be allowed into the realms of music that the butterfly piece was music as much as the fire piece.[24]

To further articulate his point regarding *Composition 1960 #5*, Young wrote to another friend, "Isn't it wonderful if someone listens to something he is ordinarily supposed to

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[21] Kotz, 73.
[22] Larry Miller, "Interview with George Maciunas, March 24, 1978," ed. Jon Hendricks, *Fluxus Etc/Addenda I: The Gilbert and Lila Silverman Collection* (New York: Ink&, 1983) 21, quoted in Kotz, 80.
[23] La Monte Young, *Lecture 1960*, Sandford, 75-76.
[24] *Ibid*., 74.

look at?"[25] Although Young was assuming a primacy of sound in music, I read his *Compositions 1960* more in the vein of Brecht's "everything that happens" approach. By presenting the audience with a picture to listen to, he also showed them its inversion – the musicality of the visual, much as Cage did in his silent presentation of David Tudor in *4'33"*. Pilgrim Carnival was also an inversion of Young's idea. The blindfolds removed the audience's sight, emphasizing the visual imagery that is embedded in sound.

Pilgrim Carnival is much busier in terms of instructions and elements than Young's *Composition 1960 #2* and *Composition 1960 #5* or Brecht's isolated events. As experimental music, they broadened the scope of music, whether intentionally or unintentionally, by focusing on the musicality of very minimal, often everyday events. That paring down was necessary for the understanding of a redefinition of music, and Pilgrim Carnival is an outgrowth of that new definition.

Another common attribute it has with them is that the score to Pilgrim Carnival is an event score in the form of a comic strip[26]. Rather than use language, it uses pictures. Although Young's scores are called "word pieces," *Composition 1960 #9* is a picture. It "consists of a straight line drawn on a piece of paper. It is to be performed and comes with no instructions."[27] The comic strip score is far more descriptive, and it does come with instructions. It consists of nine frames:

1. Woman receives an invitation in the mail.
2. Wearing a towel, woman applies mascara in the mirror.
3. Woman drives with invitation on the dashboard.
4. Woman is blindfolded outside of a dark entrance.
5. Woman sits in the sound installation blindfolded.

[25] *Ibid*., 76.
[26] See Score in APPENDIX.
[27] *Ibid.,* 72.

6. Woman mingles and chats at the reception.
7. Woman drives home at night.
8. Woman brushes her teeth in the mirror, getting ready for bed.
9. Woman gets Thank You card with a picture of her in the installation.

In addition to the comic strip, the score includes floor plans for the installation anteroom, the installation, and the reception sites, as well as extensive performance notes regarding cast, tasks, timing, and supplies for each of the events.

The comic strip depicts the combined effort of the composer and audience member ("woman") in the production of the piece. The first, middle, and last frames show the composition being done to the woman by the composer, the fourth and sixth frames show a collaborative effort by both the woman and the composer, and the remaining four frames show the woman doing the composition. She dresses and drives in anticipation of the installation and reception, and then she drives and undresses while reflecting on the events and acousmatic subject matter. Her participation is neither painful nor explicitly demanded by me, and her anticipation and reflection is involuntary.

From Russolo's musical classification of noises through Cage's silence to Brecht's presentation of "everything that happens" as music, there is a continual expanding and contracting that is characteristic of the redefinition of music. Pilgrim Carnival is an extremely broad presentation of what I believe to be music. It is aural, visual (at times), tactile, psychological, olfactory, and palatable. It owes itself to generations of definitions of music.

CHAPTER 3

AUTOBIOGRAPHY: THE ARTIST'S BODY IN TIME AND PLACE

Autobiographical logic permeates much of the performance art and experimental noise music tradition. In using the artist's body and personal spaces, ambient sounds of his/her environment, and readymade objects from the artist's everyday world, the artist presents a subtext regarding his/her life and time. Many characteristics of happenings are found in twentieth century interdisciplinary art: banal subject matter, site-specific performance spaces, free use of several media, non-narrative theater, and the use of the artist's body as both art object and art maker. However, this autobiographical logic is a deviation from the alogic that Michael Kirby attributed to early happenings. Although the elements did not create a narrative, the story of my current life and environment formed the logic of Pilgrim Carnival. This chapter is an exposition of autobiographical logic in the works of three major interdisciplinary artists: Luigi Russolo, R. Murray Schafer, and Marina Abramovic.

Sound and the entire environmental sensorium are eagerly accepted and studied in the experimental visual and performance art traditions. George Brecht's idea that music (or art, dance, etc.) is "everything that happens" is acknowledged by theorists as well as practiced by artists. Working from Brecht's definition, I look at the work of Marina Abramovic, who is typically categorized as a visual artist, from a musical perspective. Her art is focused on catharsis through public exhibition of personal struggles. She

employs audience participation and chance to the point of real danger. For aesthetic composition, she organizes materials to emphasize resonance and a sense of extended time. In addition to her visual use of time and timbre, she works with aural sound as a medium in her performances.

While the experimental music tradition is often interdisciplinary (and inter-sensory) in its practice, there is a decided focus on sound alone in its theory. Perhaps this is due to a music notation system, traditional or non-traditional, which is a specialized thus exclusive language unique to the discipline of music. The musicians discussed here, however, theorize about the unwritten sounds of their environments and how to classify, reproduce, and manipulate them. As discussed in the previous chapter, both John Cage and La Monte Young created interdisciplinary works, but they give a primacy to sound in their writings and discussions about music. Russolo's noise instruments are sculptural and visually interesting, but he focused on their sonic capabilities. Schafer recognizes the need to explore not only sound but also its integration into the "wider study of the total environment."[1] He nevertheless theorizes about music as a strictly sonic phenomenon.

Luigi Russolo expanded the definition of music to include noise, or the sounds of his life and time. His relationship to noise was personal and based on his life experience. In his "Futurist Manifesto," he traces the history of Western music and its sounds through the lives and natural sounds of its contemporaries. He argues that the noises of modern industrial society (his society) should be included in the modern musical palette, because "the machine has created such a variety and contention of noises that pure sound in its

[1] R. Murray Schafer, *The Tuning of the World* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1977),12.

slightness and monotony no longer provokes emotion."[2] Pure sound, referring to non-noise traditional orchestral sound, is outdated. It is not representative of his time and environment. That music must recreate one's environment and time in order to "provoke emotion" emphasizes Russolo's need to tell his own life story.

This autobiographical need is reiterated in his writings "The Noises of Nature and Life" and especially "The Noises of War." In the former, he uncovers the musicality of natural sources of noise, such as thunder, rain, wind, and a gurgling brook, and he discusses the pitch and timbral attributes of the sounds of his life, particularly trains and urban industrial sounds. He states, "…I hope that my reader, too, if he would like to analyze the noises of nature and life in the manner that I have presented in this chapter will be able to find equal pleasure and an unsuspected number of new emotions there."[3] He tells the story of his experiences with these sounds and encourages the reader to listen for himself, to recognize the influence and power of the sounds of his own life and time. The *Art of Noises* is Russolo's guide to listening and composing with environmental sounds as well as an important historical text.

In "The Noises of War," his discussion of battle sounds is not only personally motivated but also propagandistic. He begins the essay, "Joining my futurist friends in the various battles on the side of the Almighty,…, I had ample opportunity to study the noises of war, both those that threatened us close at hand and those in the distance …"[4] The "Noises of War" is an excited first-hand account of the violent and life-threatening

[2] Luigi Russolo, "Futurist Manifesto", *The Art of Noises*, trans. Barclay Brown (New York: Pendragon Press, 1986), 24.
[3] *Ibid.*, 48.
[4] *Ibid.*, 49.

orchestra of sounds that he encountered while he was a soldier. He exclaims: "Marvelous and tragic symphony of the noises of war! The strangest and the most powerful noises are gathered together there!"[5] No doubt he refers to their destructive power and potential threat as well as the power of emotional provocation that these sounds indicated for him in battle. His pro-war patriotism and his own injuries from shrapnel must have affected his enthusiasm, both positive and negative, for the sounds of war. For Russolo, his life story was an important and magnificent story to tell, not only for its power to provoke emotion through music but also for its political message. Therefore, he proudly made his art out of the materials of his life.

In *The Tuning of the World* R. Murray Schafer asks the question: "What is the relationship between man and the sounds of his environment and what happens when those sounds change?"[6] Russolo was fascinated by his relationship with the sounds of his world, finding provocative power in the new sounds of war and modern machinery. He was optimistic about their musical possibilities. But while industrial and urban noises were new and in the foreground of Russolo's life, they have since become constituents of a detrimental background, better known as noise pollution.

Schafer opens his introduction to *The Tuning of the World* with a quote from Walt Whitman's *Song of Myself*, where Whitman writes about his own experience with listening to the sounds of his world:

> Now I will do nothing but listen…
> I hear all sounds running together, combined, fused or following,
> Sounds of the city and sounds out of the city, sounds of the day and night …[7]

[5] *Ibid.*, 50.
[6] Schafer, 3-4.
[7] *Ibid.*, 3.

In transcribing the sounds of his world into poetry, he is singing the song of himself, or musically doing autobiography. To answer the first part of Schafer's question above, the relationship between Whitman and the sounds of his environment is one of shared history; the sounds around him are a part of his autobiography, or song of himself.

In his own work, Schafer addresses the second part of his question with regards to growing noise pollution in cities. While earlier musicians had absorbed and reproduced the sounds of their environments in concert settings, Schafer suggests that the modern composer "treat the world as a macrocosmic musical composition" where the musicians are "anyone and anything that sounds."[8] Rather than accept the world's soundscape as is, Schafer suggests a plan of action to design the macrocosmic composition to his liking:

> Noise pollution results when man does not listen carefully. Noises are the sounds we have learned to ignore…We must seek a way to make environmental acoustics a positive study program. Which sounds do we want to preserve, encourage, multiply? When we know this, the boring or destructive sounds will be conspicuous enough and we will know why we must eliminate them.[9]

He takes the approach to mixing a soundscape composition and imposes that as a possibility for composing the soundscape source itself – the world around us. While he embraces John Cage's open interpretation of music, Schafer is not willing to let the music happen indeterminately or by chance. After having already answered it, he asks the question: "is the soundscape of the world an indeterminate composition over which we have no control, or are *we* its composers and performers, responsible for giving it form and beauty?"[10] He wants to not only write his autobiography through sound but also to

[8] *Ibid.*, 5.
[9] *Ibid.*, 4.
[10] *Ibid.*, 5.

have advance influence over its creation, while composing the world and thus influencing its inhabitants' autobiographies in the process.

This is a very different approach from Marcel Duchamp's autobiographical readymades. His work, while seemingly confrontational in its irreverence, is passively critical of his world, leaving its renovation to the spectators. He used the visual objects of his world in a generalizing way, opening up the gallery to the world, allowing spectators to peer outside into their own environments. By re-presenting functional objects as art, he told the pared-down objective story of his life with a sarcastic twist. He poked fun at the self-important individual. His *Boite-en-Valise* (1941) is a travelling case containing sixty-nine miniature versions of his earlier works. It is the story of his life through his work in the form of a portable commodity.

In a period when individuality and Abstract Expressionism were the paradigms for American high art, he created his *Wayward Landscape* (1946), by ejaculating onto a small piece of black silk. In doing so, he created a miniature critique of Jackson Pollock's huge drip paintings, as well as pioneered the direction of post-war performance art by writing his autobiography with his body. David Hopkins writes: "[*Wayward Landscape*] stands as one of the first examples of what, in the 1960s, became known as 'Body Art', that is, art directly linked to the body and to bodily identity."[11] While *Wayward Landscape* was not performed live, Duchamp privileged the concept and process over the end visual product, again pioneering characteristics of performance art.

[11] David Hopkins, *After Modern Art: 1945-2000* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000) 38.

As a branch of performance art, body art is usually performed live and uses the artist's own body as the art-object. It is often emotionally risky and/or physically painful or dangerous. Body art often implicates the audience as voyeur, and sometimes as sadist or accomplice. By objectifying their own bodies, many body artists experience catharsis during performance and as a direct result of their art. Their art is both the manifestation of their autobiographies thus far and the embodiment of their real or imagined autobiographies.

Several body artists experimented with ritual and endurance in the 1960s and 1970s. The Vienna Actionists, particularly Hermann Nitsch, created visceral public spectacles using blood and animal entrails in staged rituals. Nitsch used the most abject elements of both human and animal bodies as media, while his motif was one of religious imagery, particularly crucifixion. In his actions, animals were slaughtered and displayed, then disemboweled onto similarly stretched and bound (live) humans. The rituals were "supposedly illustrating Aristotle's notion of catharsis through fear, terror and compassion."[12]

While Nitsch used the blood of carcasses poured over carcass-like humans to create cathartic ritual, Belgrade artist Marina Abramovic, who participated in Nitsch's actions, and Californian Chris Burden let their own blood pour and put their own lives at risk in their art. In Burden's most famous performance, *Shoot* (1971), he had a friend shoot him with a rifle from fifteen feet away. The performance implicated the audience and the performers in a crime, and Burden lost a large piece of his arm. His early

performances were dangerous and difficult feats. They included *Five Day Locker Piece* (1971), where a friend confined him in a 2'x2'x3' locker for five days, *Deadman* (1972), where he lay hidden in a canvas bag on a busy street until arrested by police, and *Transfixed* (1974), in which he was crucified atop a Volkswagen beetle. As in *Shoot*, the above performances all employed and implicated an assistant.

Like Chris Burden, Marina Abramovic uses her body and human sadistic tendencies to create dangerous performances. There is an obvious focus on design and visual composition in her work, and she is much more publicized and intimate with her audience than Burden. Of the Burden pieces mentioned above, only *Shoot* was performed in front of a gallery audience. Abramovic performs acts of physical endurance and emotional exposure almost always for an audience or with audience members, and her pieces are public exhibitions of her entire life. While Burden has long since removed himself from the dangers of his early body art, Abramovic continues to make endurance pieces as well as perform early works.

In her Rhythm series of 1973-4, Marina Abramovic experimented with performing her body in conscious and unconscious states. She risked her life during the performances of both *Rhythm 5* and *Rhythm 0*, first by nearly suffocating to death in the center of a flaming star and later by giving the audience permission to mutilate or kill her as they please. In both cases the audience eventually came to her rescue. The score for *Rhythm 0* is as follows:

Rhythm O	Instructions. There are 72 objects on the table that one can use on me as desired.

[12] RoseLee Goldberg, *Performance Art: From Futurism to the Present* (New York: Thames and Hudson, 2001) 163.

Performance.
I am the object.
During this period I take full responsibility.
Duration: 6 hours (8 pm – 2 am)
1974
Studio Morra, Naples.

Among the seventy-two objects available to the audience were several weapons, including a gun and a bullet, cosmetics, food, construction materials, paint and a Polaroid camera.[13] During the performance, she was painted and written on, strung up and moved around like a material sculpture. She was also covered by various materials and objects from the table as well as stripped and touched. She was scraped, nicked, and sliced, and at one point a loaded gun was placed in her hand and pointed to her head. While being mutilated, spectators further demeaned her by taking snapshots of her and having her display them in her hands. She did not interact verbally with the audience, but her tears were unavoidable, and one audience member chose a handkerchief from the table to wipe the artist's eyes.

Rhythm 0 is an extremely powerful chance composition that might better be termed risk composition. In its original performance, it gave the audience license to create her art as well as the option to end her life. They molded her and moved her, dressed and undressed her, hurt and consoled her. Any spectator could have killed her or made her kill herself. *Rhythm 0* was the last of the rhythm series, which was a discourse about the objectified artist's body either conscious or unconscious. While she was conscious during *Rhythm 0*, the instruments she provided for the audience opened up the possibility of making her unconscious.

Rhythm 2 (1974) consists visually of the artist dressed in black sitting in a chair next to a table. On the table are two glasses of water, two bottles of pills, and a radio. All of the visual elements are primarily functional; the artist did not design or make them, nor are they presented as readymades. The focus of this piece is on the actions and reactions of the artist, with the other objects there to facilitate her bodily performance. Her performance of *Rhythm 2* is internalized to the extreme that the artist loses control of her body and is unconscious at times of the external world. The artist's activity is the result of her ingestion of the two medications. The first medication causes her to lose control of her body, sending her into violent muscle contractions, distorting her face and body for nearly an hour. After a ten-minute break set to radio music, she takes a second medication that sends her into an unconscious catatonic state for six hours. The first medication takes control of her body, while the second takes control of her mind. Her combination of intentional actions and involuntary reactions create an interesting musical composition, performing first fast and unpredictable gestures, then a radio intermezzo, followed by a meditative drone piece.

After her Rhythm series and seven years of solo performances, Abramovic began collaborating with performance artist and then boyfriend Ulay. Among their first collaborations was *Imponderabilia* (1977), where the two artists stood nude facing each other in a small entrance to a gallery. Ulay and Abramovic tied their hair back in the same manner, and only their sexes and slight difference in height distinguished one from the other visually. As the pair faced each other, audience members had to decide which

[13] Marina Abramovic, *Marina Abramovic: Artist Body: Performances, 1969-1998*. (Milan: Edizioni

nude body, or which sex, to face as they squeezed through the entrance, making contact with both bodies. Like her Rhythm series, her collaborations with Ulay were experimental, conducting research on human behavior. Her twelve-year intimate relationship with artist Ulay was treated as an experiment and played out for an audience from beginning to end. They loved and abused each other in public, and in their final collaboration *The Lovers* (1988), they walked from either end of the Great Wall of China to break up. After ninety days of walking, they met and said goodbye to each other, ending the relationship and the public experiment.

Ulay may have left the laboratory, but Abramovic has continued to publicly endure and display physical ritual in her work. She sees purpose in her work as, "…[a] continuing attempt to create a cultural dialogue about and to reconnect with our need to ritualize the simple actions of everyday life like walking, standing, sitting, lying, eating, washing, drinking, dressing, undressing, sleeping, dreaming, writing and thinking."[14] Sometimes these rituals are staged in a crisp, minimalist style, sometimes with very little design elements, and still other times highly visually designed with multiple layers of action and content.

She has demanded more of her audience members' bodies in recent years, often creating environments in which spectators perform and become aware of their own daily rituals. In her series *Transitory Objects for Human Use* (1989-Work in Progress), she maintains concern for the body, constructing meditative environments or situations for

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Charta, 1998) 80-81.
[14] *Ibid.,* 294.

the audience to experience with their own bodies. Regarding this series, Abramovic has stated:

> After walking the Chinese Wall I realized that for the first time I had been doing a performance where the audience was not physically present. In order to transmit this experience to them I built a series of transitory objects with the idea that the audience could actively take part. The basic structure was sitting, standing and lying.
> As I was building the objects I paid a lot of attention to the materials I used. I limited myself to materials like copper, iron, wood, minerals, pig blood and human hair. I believe these materials contain certain energies.
> I do not consider these works as sculptures, but as transitory objects to trigger physical or mental experiences among the public through direct interaction. When the experience is achieved the objects can be removed.[15]

While she stages the everyday as ritualized actions, her stages are not banal and have grown increasingly designed and decorated since her early performances. *Wartesaal* (1993) was an installation constructed from seven identical wooden chairs each with seven steps leading up to the reclined seat. Each chair was positioned in front of a mirror above an iron shelf. On each shelf was a different large mineral rock. The instructions for the public were as follows: "Take off your shoes. Climb one of the seven chairs. Sit down. Look into the mirror."[16] The gallery space was all white with track lighting and wood floors. The spectators as readymade objects completed Abramovic's installation both visually and in performance. Their indeterminate interactions with the chairs, mirrors, and minerals made the performance, while at any given time their presence in the installation completed the visual picture, at times being captured in a photograph.

Abramovic used the audience in a more controlled way to complete the visual picture of *Escape* (1998). This site-specific installation took place at the Women's Exercise Yard, Former Magistrate's Court (prison) in Melbourne, Australia. Audience

[15] Marina Abramovic, *Marina Abramovic: Public Body*: *Installation and Objects, 1965-2001* (Milan: Edizioni Charta) 84.

members were guided into the installation by "Escape Guards," played by Abramovic's students dressed uniformly in guard costumes. The guards strapped them into metal frames, constrained them with leather straps at the wrists, ankles, neck, and waist, placed soundproof earphones on them and stood watch over them for twenty-five minutes. The piece was later recreated in a gallery space without the guards. In both installations, audience members were robbed of movement and environmental sound. Photographs of the installations show many with their eyes closed as well, particularly in the gallery space, where they are laying down. Abramovic constructed the material installation objects, but the audience performed the piece internally. The outer casings of the artist's audience are objectified along with the artist's material artworks, but the performance still happens inside the shells of their bodies.

Since 1989, Abramovic's work as a solo performer and installations for audience participation have been focused on meditation and healing. "*Soul Operation Room* (2000) should be seen as a proposition to the audience to take part in a soul exploration journey on a more mental than physical level …"[17] In this multi-layered performance installation, Abramovic designs some audience members' bodies to be the visual objects as they mutually perform for themselves and for other readymade or as-is spectators. As designed objects, audience members are either dressed in white "Blending-In Coats" or they are nude. As readymade objects, they remain in their own clothes and fill in the performance space as spectators.

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[16] *Ibid*., 186.
[17] *Ibid.*, 256.

Visually, the central object is the "Soul Operation Table" on which an audience member lays nude. The table is elevated and lit from below, while bright-colored planes form a partial canopy above the table. The audience member is instructed to lie down on the table, choose a color plane, and look at it for one hour. Meanwhile, other spectators view the nude figure as part of the art object in the center of the gallery space. Unlike earlier works, such as *Rhythm 0*, the audience does not threaten the objectified body but rather shares in the potentially communal experience. Also, unlike works in which her own body is the object, the audience members are catered to as guests and are never threatened or hurt. *Soul Operation Room* looks like a cross between a laboratory and a spa relocated to an art gallery. It resonates with Abramovic's history as a performance artist to create cleansing experiences for her audience through risk, cathartic exposure, and self-objectification.

Abramovic's work has moved from within her body to outside of her body and into her audience's bodies, while all physical and bodily displays have retained psychological elements of catharsis through endurance, exposure, meditation, and memory. Her performances have always been an extreme and often visually redesigned reflection of her life. They are cathartic in that they are both emotional purgation and self-purification. She confronts not only herself but also her audience with physical and psychic mirrors. RoseLee Goldberg wrote "…Abramovic's performances are propelled as much by her desire to transform her own fears and emotions into startling images,

distended in time, as they are her wish to unravel the perceptions and fears of viewers."[18] Although she is referring to her early Rhythm series and collaborations with Ulay, this statement is even more applicable to her *Transitory Objects for Human Use*.

While her work has moved into the minds and bodies of her audience in recent years, an ongoing solo performance project *The Biography* is a therapeutic work consisting of her life-work and existing for herself. In a 1998 interview, Abramovic discussed *The Biography* and its impetus:

> I finally figured out that only way I could get over the separation [from Ulay] and survive the pain and get on with things was to stage my own life. This was *The Biography*, the theater piece in which I am actually playing myself. It was the first time I showed the public all aspects of myself. Previously I had always been playing this heroic part, never making fun of myself. I didn't show that I like junk food, that I like glamour, that I like fashion… I took myself too seriously before. It was a big relief to make fun of myself.
> *The Biography* will continue as a kind of open piece in progress till the end of my life. Once or twice a year I play *The Biography* including the new material of the last year or so in it. I can't act, I can't sing, I get out there on the stage and do things I'm really ashamed of. It's a huge relief."[19]

The Biography is a portfolio, similar to Duchamp's *Boite-en-Valise*. Her life's work, which is also her life, is re-presented on stage and miniaturized in time. Unlike Duchamp's satire of the sellable artist, Abramovic's *The Biography* is sincere therapy for herself. She annually or biannually re-experiences release and cleansing through the staging of her life.

RoseLee Goldberg has studied and written extensively on performance art since its popularization in the art world in the early 1970s. Regarding body art of the same period, she states: "…concentration on the personality and appearance of the artist led

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[18] Roselee Goldberg, "Here and Now," *Marina Abramovic: Objects, Performance, Video, Sound*, ed. Chrissie Iles (Oxford: Museum of Modern Art, 1995) 11-18, reprinted in Tracey Warr and Amelia Jones, *The Artist's Body* (London: Phaidon Press, 2000) 246.
[19] Thomas McEvilley, "Stages of Energy: performance Art Ground Zero?" in Marina Abramovic, *Artist Body:Performances, 1969-1998* (Milan: Edizioni Charta, 1998) 17.

directly to a large body of work which came to be called 'autobiographical', since the content of these performances used aspects of the performer's personal history."[20] Marina Abramovic emerged in the nascent stages of autobiographical and body art and has continued to develop her work through the use of the materials of her life. She uses her body and the bodies of those with whom she relates as both the subjects and the objects of her work.

Marcel Duchamp has had vast and varied influence on all of the twentieth century art disciplines. His *Boite-en-Valise* foreshadowed the autobiographical trend in contemporary art. The artist's life is nearly always presented alongside the artist's work, and for some, such as Abramovic, the two are inseparable. The life-as-art trend in experimental music is evident in the incorporation of noises and environmental soundscapes into the work of composers, such as Luigi Russolo and R. Murray Schafer. Their soundscapes situate them in a particular time and place. By making their work about the sounds of their environments, they tell the musical stories of their lives.

[20] Goldberg, *Performance Art*, 153.

CHAPTER 4

CONCLUSION

Pilgrim Carnival is a hybrid of several genres and ideas. It is a travelling, interdisciplinary series of events, including a live-acousmatic sound installation that displays the body of the artist and others, using banal subject matter and an autobiographical logic. I have provided a lineage of relevant influences above. While Pilgrim Carnival is not a direct descendant of any of the aforementioned artists or movements, I did draw on aspects of each in its composition and formation, and autobiography was its impetus and its glue.

As Russolo extracted art from the noises of his life, Duchamp exhibited visual readymades and Pierre Schaeffer made *musique concrète*, I constructed Pilgrim Carnival out of the functional and everyday elements of *my* life. Cage expanded the idea of ready-made objects and aspects of life as art to the opening up of all sounds, not just those chosen by a composer, as music. Cage influenced the art world tremendously and in particular the early happenings artists Allan Kaprow and George Brecht. They further expanded Cage's idea to consider sound as just one aspect of "everything that happens" in music. Marina Abramovic explicitly personalized the happenings aesthetic by adding "in my life" to "everything that happens." She has made and continues to make her art out of everything that happens and has happened in her life. The artists I have chosen as historical influences on Pilgrim Carnival have explicitly blurred the boundaries between

life and art. Pilgrim Carnival is a redefinition of my art through my life as well as a redefinition of my life through my art.

In the Introduction, I described Pilgrim Carnival as a wedding ceremony in its form with daily body rituals as its subject matter. By daily ritual I mean the repeated series of acts that individuals perform to prepare their bodies for daily social interaction. I was not originally thinking of ritual as a ceremonial process. After examining my own impetus for the daily body preparations that I perform and after interviewing five other women about their routines, I recognized a ceremonial significance that our routines shared. Several aspects of the beauty rituals were not functional for the body, but they prepared the mind for its daily image and performance of the body. Three of the five women I interviewed straighten their hair with an iron every day. Of those three, one curls her hair with rollers after straightening it, and the other two usually tie their hair back in ponytails. It is the psychological process and routine of straightening that they rely on and not its physical function. When an interviewee says, "I just feel better about me when I go out and I've got my hair and my make-up done," she does not mean that it is because her hair and make-up look a certain way as much as that she has "done" them.

The ways that the five interviewees and myself do or make our bodies are representative of our culture. The relationship with the body is internal, affecting emotions, self-image and projection, but what is done to it is external, superficial, and usually epidermal. No interviewee discussed bodily rituals of scarification, piercing, fasting, or other internal or penetrating alteration of the body. The alterations made through make-up, cleansing, and hair grooming give an outward appearance of control as

well as maintain the body's polite social presence. The most violent or penetrating alteration performed by the interviewees was involving hair, both removing the hair on the body and taming the hair on the head. Body hair is removed by cutting with a razor, tearing it out at the root, or burning the follicle with lasers or chemicals. So as not to look like a "lion's mane" or a "rat's nest" the hair on the head is dried with heat, ironed flat, adjusted with chemicals, and often fastened close to the head and away from the face. The processes done to hair on the body exhibit control, and that exhibition is achieved and accomplished by the one that controls her body.

The title "Pilgrim Carnival" is a reflection of that cultural aspiration to control but still rely on the body. Pilgrim reflects control and modesty, and Carnival is flesh and body. Pilgrim Carnival both controlled and celebrated the body. I requested audience members to dress formally, removed their sight and ability to travel independently, temporarily controlling their bodies for them. Then, I rewarded their bodies with a feast of decadent food and wine, a release and celebration.

The title also represents the travelling aspect of the piece. Both words are associated with travel. A pilgrim may be travelling to Mecca, landing at Plymouth, or metaphorically peregrinating through life. Pilgrims are serious; they have a destination. They are writing a Master's Thesis. A carnival is a celebration on wheels or feet. It moves from town to town, it may be a parade, or its revelers may travel within it from booth to booth. It has fun with a Master's Thesis. Pilgrim Carnival moved from audience members' homes to a university music hall, to my home and back to each audience member's home. Within the tour, audience members experienced an installation, which

may or may not have given them a new perspective on the body or even music. Comments from the guest book included “incredible,” “very strange & FUN!,” “ loved the walk to and from!,” and “You took me through thousands of senses. Thank You.” The audience perceived Pilgrim Carnival as a series of amusements, an unusual experience, and a sensory journey.

Having already discussed how I arrived at Pilgrim Carnival in my personal life, I would like to trace how I arrived at it as a musician. Growing up as a pianist, I was always fascinated by the visual choreography that went into a musical performance. I remember a specific instance when I had to play a triple-forte chord in a piece, and my teacher was concerned that my body would be unable to produce a loud enough sound. She told me to hop up off of the bench and land on the chord, so that if the dynamic level were not high enough, at least it would look like a triple-forte effort. The choreography was successful, and one judge even commented on his surprise that “such a small girl could make such a big sound!”

When I began writing music, choreographing the players was very essential to getting them to produce the desired sounds. In “Wednesday night is family night[1],” a staged musical satire, I used movement to imply sounds that cast members were unable to produce in sound alone. There was a dinner scene where each family member repeated a spoken phrase about his/her day. The phrases were notated in pitch and rhythm but to be performed as singsongy speech rather than precise *sprechstimme*. One woman in particular had a very low, monotone voice, and she was either unwilling or unable to

make the enthusiastic squeak that was written in her part. I choreographed her movement, having her imply the lift with her head and neck, extending it and rising quickly like an ostrich. The vocal strain in her taut neck and throat were visible and created the desired effect of the squeak more so than if she had been able to produce the sound without movement.

I was still interested in the visual qualities of musical performance when I came to study at the University of North Texas. While in my acoustic composition studies I could continue experimenting with staging and choreographing the body making music, studying electroacoustic composition forced me to think in terms of the sonic result alone. I was struck by the broad associative interpretations available to sound removed from its visual context. I had the most fun when I made "Moisture[2]," a short piece using a recording and simple mixing of one event: while putting lotion on my hands, I accidentally bumped into the microphone and laughed under my breath. The combination of sounds when amplified made a roomful of listeners blush.

I was also struck by the performance practice of electroacoustic music. Electroacoustic music concerts are often held in dim light because there is usually no performer to watch. Sound diffusers have not yet developed the same level of stage presence as other instrumentalists. I observed in concerts that the serious listeners of electroacoustic music, professors and those in the know, seem to close their eyes during performances. I feel odd closing my eyes in public, but at the same time, it is annoying to

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[1] Kayli House, "Wednesday night is family night," for piano, saxophone, guitar, tape, and seven moving and speaking people, Reed College, 1997. (15:00)
[2] *Ibid.*, "Moisture," for tape, 2000. (5:02)

look at speakers and wires while listening to something potentially moving. I decided that if I were going to compose music that was just about sound, I should remove sight from the audience entirely, hence the blindfolds in Pilgrim Carnival.

Listening without sight relies heavily on the direction from which the sound is coming. In his book *On Sonic Art*, Trevor Wishart lays out the different psychological implications of directions of sounds, focusing on sounds that come from in front or behind the listener. He claims that sounds that come from behind the listener "tend to be more stressful, mysterious or frightening," while sounds that come from in front of the listener are less threatening and make the listener feel included in a conversation.[3] I was intrigued by the dramatic possibilities of using directional sound in the early conception of Pilgrim Carnival. I had originally thought I would write an acoustic opera for a blindfolded audience, using mostly the sounds of movement and speech performed by a cast placed in and around the audience.

Then I took courses in documentary film history and production, which again made me rethink my ideas about composing music. The approach to documentary filmmaking is much like original *musique concrète* composing. With a topic in mind, the filmmaker goes out and records footage and then organizes it into a film in the editing process. The difference in the editing process is that the filmmaker, unlike the electroacoustic composer, tries to maintain clarity rather than turn the footage upside-down and backwards until it is unrecognizable. That is where the idea to present the interviews unaltered came from. In putting together the acousmatic layer of the Pilgrim

[3] Trevor Wishart, *On Sonic Art* (Amsterdam: Harwood Academic Publishers, 1996) 200.

Carnival installation, I used only the mixing capabilities of Pro Tools. I treated the sound sources as I had the audio tracks in the film editing software Final Cut Pro. The interviews were cut to tell the story I wanted to tell while striving to remain true to the subjects' responses.

In addition to the interview footage, I gathered observational[4] footage about the topic of beauty ritual by recording my own ritual from start to finish. I recorded myself four times, trying as much as possible to become accustomed to and unaware of the recording device. To keep the footage natural and not impose a narrative on it, I chose what I thought to be the best overall recording and mixed it into the piece as an uncut track. I brought down the levels at times to input moments of silence or to highlight the interviews, and I moved the observational track around the four stereo planes.

Environmental noise, which is usually avoided in documentary filmmaking, was an aspect of the soundscape that I wanted to include in the interviews. Because I interviewed the women in their bathrooms, I wanted the soundscape of the spaces to be natural. Some were more successful than others. One woman lived close to the railroad tracks and had a window unit air conditioner and several fans. She also spoke very softly, and her interview was almost unusable. I live close to the freeway, and there is considerable truck noise in my interview and all of the observational footage, but it ended up providing a stabilizing bass for the entire layer. The least ritualistic interviewee, who is a recovering heroin addict and mother of two, has two televisions, fans, children, and a dog in her bathroom's soundscape. Another woman's soundscape is a large marble

[4] "Observational" is used here as in the fly-on-the-wall approach to documentary filmmaking.

bathroom with high ceilings, including her baby and a neighbor edging outside. At the end of her interview, her doorbell chimes like a muted clock tower, she clicks across the floor out of the bathroom, saying "let me go give this man his money," her baby lets out one last squeal, followed by a moment of Cagean silence. In that silence, the air conditioner softly hums, the baby quietly pants, the neighbor neighborly edges, and all sounds bounce off the expensive marble.

Several practical obstacles contributed to the formation of Pilgrim Carnival. As in documentary filmmaking, there is an inherent element of chance in dealing with and depending on other people to tell a story. In the production process of Pilgrim Carnival, I had to continually adjust the original concept to fit what was practically available and successful.

I had originally planned to interview eight women, one per channel, regarding their beauty habits and issues of self-image. The interviews would stay in one speaker each, and in front of each speaker would sit its live sound source. Intercut with that would be sounds of men wrestling and a live choreographed dance. I narrowed the interviews down to four women, one per each stereo plane. I also changed the men wrestling to my cousin lifting weights in the garage. Finally, rather than a dance troupe the live element became me performing a one-hour yoga routine.

I changed the elements for reasons of practicality, convenience, cost, time, and composition. Four women speaking simultaneously were polyphonically interesting, and eight would have been too difficult to hear, exhausting the ear to the point that it might have given up on trying to listen. Likewise, four hour-long interviews plus all of the

observational and ambient footage created a very large amount of digital information to be stored on the communal computer. I also found that moving stereo planes were more effective than eight individual stationary channels. Also, having worked in stereo electroacoustic composition before, I found it made more sense to create small stereo compositions first and then fit them together spatially, similar to the way a stereo piece is diffused live.

I changed the live exercise elements for reasons of convenience and coherency. One of the wrestlers strained his back, and neither seemed very comfortable with being recorded. I believe they were afraid I would make them sound like they were lovers and not fighters. Either way, I found that my cousin, whom I also live with, made some very interesting sounds during his nightly weightlifting routine. I had heard it going on so regularly that I had failed to pay attention to it as a potential soundscape, it was just a part of my daily life.

He works out in the garage, so the truck noise from the freeway is even louder than in my bathroom. The sound quality of the metal weights also provided a nice contrast to the speaking and water sounds. Like my own exercise routine, his is loaded with heavy breathing, but unlike mine, his is unpredictable. That was the quality that I was looking for in the wrestling recording. A wrestling match is organic, irregular, and unpredictable. Similarly, his weightlifting routine is without a steady beat or pattern.

My kickboxing routine was a good contrast with its complete regularity of breath and movement. In conjunction with the live yoga, my exercising became the patterned, regular movement and breath that was originally to be a choreographed dance. I realized

that with the continual activity of the photographer, ushers and blindfolded guests moving through the space, I needed to conserve space, and decided to reduce the dance troupe down to one exerciser. I stayed within a two-by-six-foot space and had to remain conscious of guests being ushered through my small space.

Casting myself as the exerciser in the piece, I had to cast a soundperson to run the ADATs (eight-channel digital audio format) and look after the soundboard. This worked out serendipitously in that I had to pay a CEMI[5] lab attendant to be at the concert because it was on a Saturday, so I had him run sound. I was originally going to cast actors as the ushers and hosts, but as the piece became more personal, I chose to use family and friends instead.

The obstacles that arose during the production process of Pilgrim Carnival for the most part worked to solidify its autobiographical mold. Paring down elements, such as reducing the number of interviews and live performers, cut down the compositional clutter. Other than the original concept, cutting down the material, as in documentary film editing, was the most influential job I did as the composer.

I now have hours of material, recordings both audio and video, from which to create new compositions if I choose. The process of doing a thesis and writing this essay has inspired me to use any and all material that I may have. I could take just the pauses and sighs from all of the interviews and tell an entirely new story. The video recordings of the November 10, 2001 installation contain elements that could be infinitely rearranged either by me or by someone else.

[5] "CEMI" is the Center for Experimental Music and Intermedia at the University of North Texas.

After studying the works of performance artists discussed in this essay, I am inspired to use my body and perform more explicitly, doing pieces in which my body and identity are completely exposed. Using special effects to create physical gore in a concert music setting is an exciting prospect. As Pilgrim Carnival was a travelling series, a tour of different media and venues may be a next step: moving from audio, to stage, to film, to combinations of media.

Another interesting approach to composing may be to remove myself from the product entirely. I would like to experiment with anonymity, making pieces and attributing them to fictional composers, such as my dog Roxy. Roxanne House, who is only six years old, has been working on a grand choral piece that tells the story of her life in a remarkably mature manner for her age and species. The opening movement is an intricate exposition of the many ways one can call her name. Even if her melodies are trite, a dog writing music is a miracle!

Humor is an element that I will now use more boldly. Marcel Duchamp is revered as a pioneer of contemporary art and influence on experimental music, and humor was as essential to his work as the sequence was to Bach. As a living composer, I hope to be continually influenced and inspired not only by history but also by the world in which I live with other people, things, and artworks. Music can be made out of everything that happens in my life, and my autobiography is an ongoing source of material.

APPENDIX

PERFORMANCE NOTES, SCORE, AND FLOOR PLANS

Performance Notes

Correspondence:

Invitations
Mail to prospective audience members at least one week prior to event.

Thank You Cards
Include photograph of respective audience member experiencing the installation and mail within one week of the event.

Installation:

Two Hosts
Welcome audience and direct them to sign the **Guest Book**, explaining the process for experiencing the sound installation to the audience as they arrive, and blindfold them. Instruct guests to reception site after they exit installation.

Two Ushers
Usher guests in and out of sound installation and remove blindfolds.

Photographer
Discreetly take pictures of audience members experiencing installation.

Four Posers
Sit for portrait in the installation space for the duration of the event. Attend reception and mingle.

Exerciser
Perform one hour of exercise in the center of installation space.

Sound Person
Oversee playing of sound documentary on eight-channel speaker system.

Reception:

Guests
All performers of event as well as audience members and possible invitees who may skip the performance.

Reception Site
Should be a warm and personal space such as the composer's home.

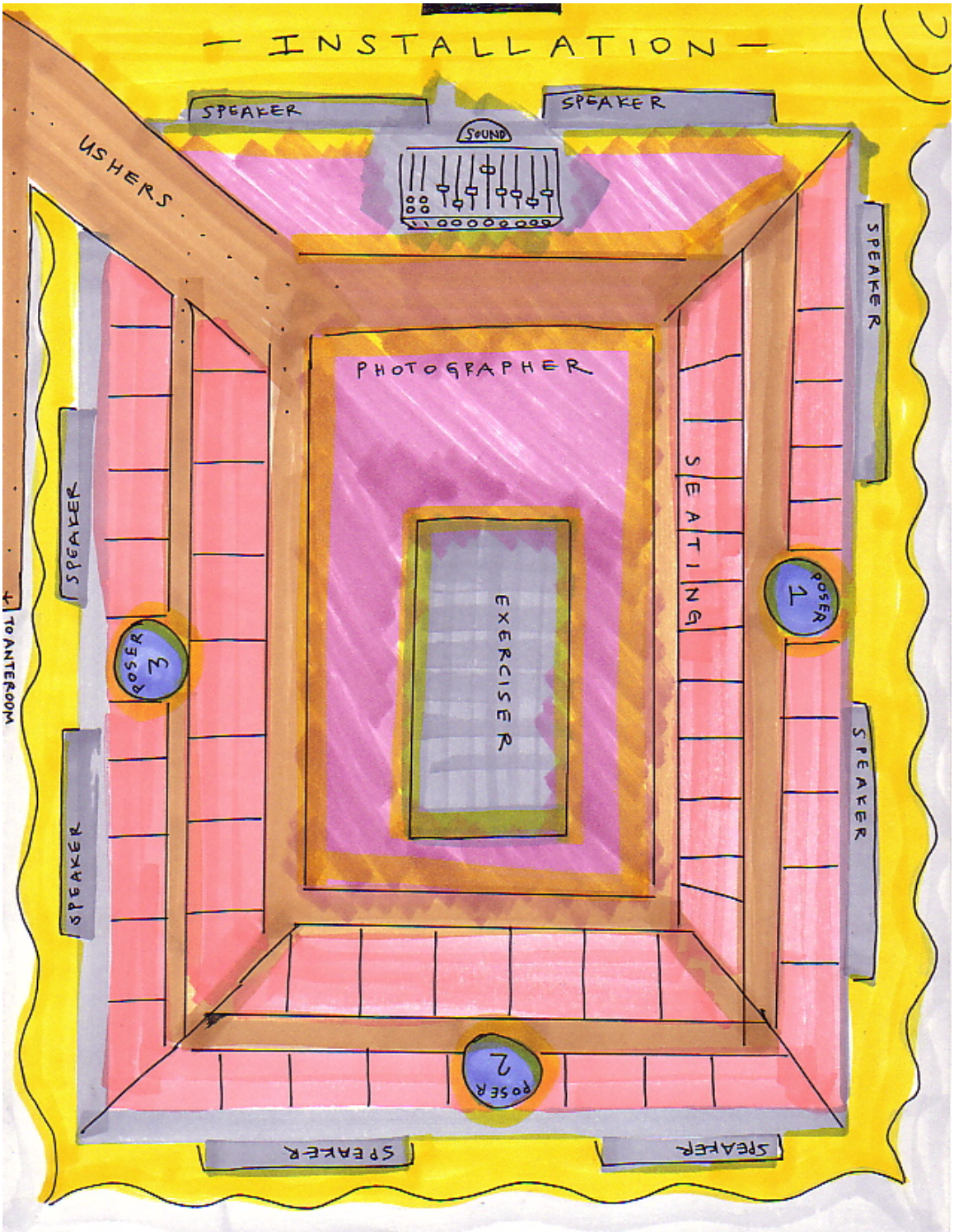
Food and Drink
Must be properly served (no plastic).

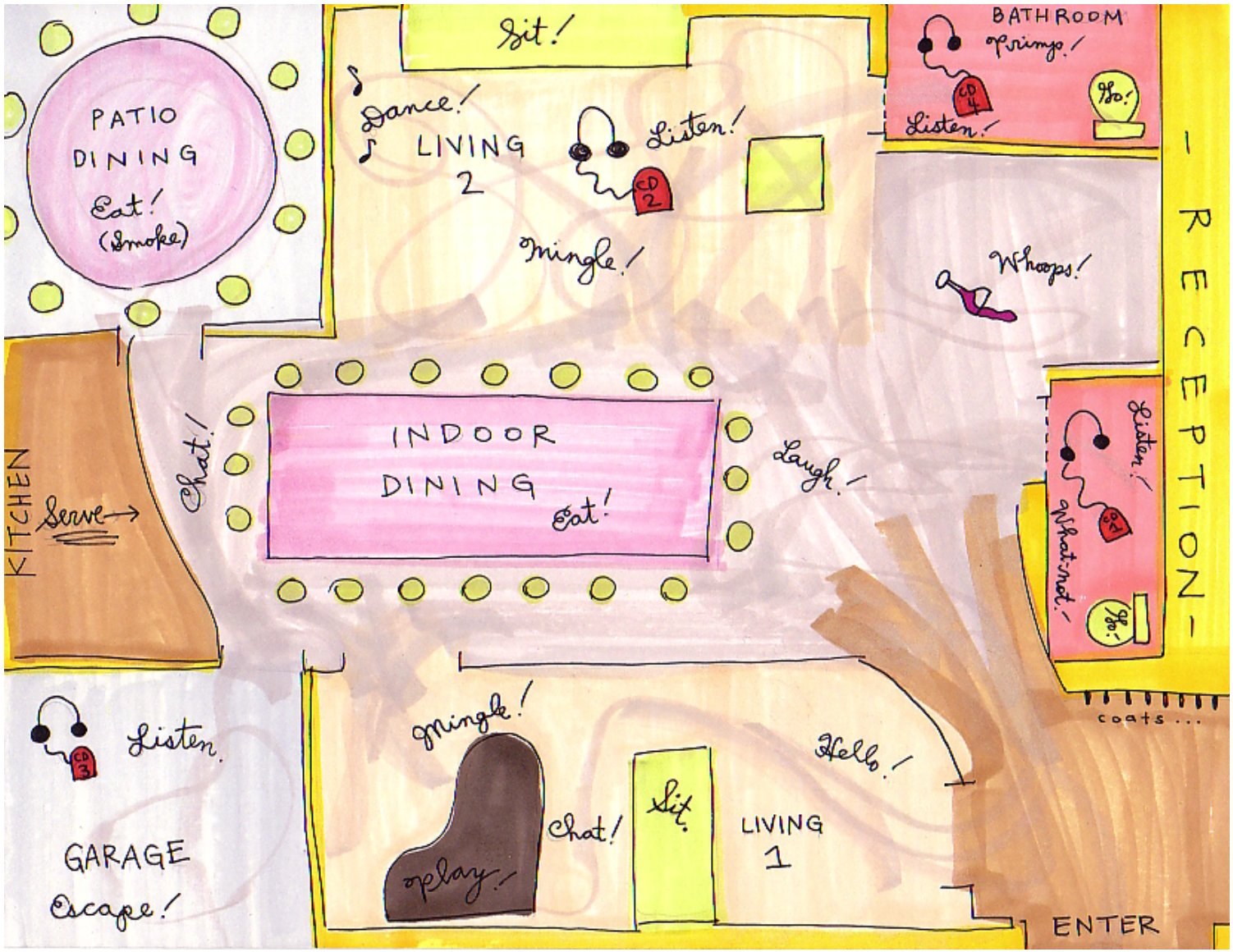
Music
Fun party music conducive to socializing and possible dancing.

Four sets of headphones/Four CD players/Four CDs
Located in sound source spaces, i.e. bathroom, kitchen. Each CD plays one hour of pure sound source in its space.


You are cordially invited...
Thursday
7:00 p.m.
prayer drive please
R.S.V.P.
Welcome!
Please sign
guest book
Thanks!
Thank You!
K. Horse

- ANTEROOM -
GUESTS...
USHER 2
USHER 2
USHER 3
HOSTESS 1
HOSTESS 2
BLINDFOLD
GUEST BOOK
DIRECTIONS to RECEPTION
TO INSTALLATION


INSTALLATION
SPEAKER
SPEAKER
SOUND
USHERS
SPEAKER
PHOTOGRAPHER
SEATING
EXERCISER
SPEAKER
SPEAKER
TO ANTEROOM
POSER 3
POSER 1
POSER 2
SPEAKER
SPEAKER


Sit!
BATHROOM
springs!
Yo!
Listen!
Dance!
LIVING
2
Listen!
CD 2
CD 4
Mingle!
Whoops!
RECEPTION
PATIO
DINING
Eat!
(Smoke)
Listen!
CD 5
What-nat!
Yo!
INDOOR
DINING
Eat!
Chat!
Laugh!
KITCHEN
Serve
coats...
Listen
CD 3
mingle!
Hello!
play
Chat!
Sit
LIVING
1
GARAGE
Escape!
ENTER

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